



Meeting Notes

Signage Focus Group Meeting

8:30 a.m. – Thursday, July 23, 2009

APS Conference Room, 101 West Cherry Ave, Flagstaff, AZ

1. Welcome and Introductions

In attendance:

Phil Keesee, Citizen (Chair) NOAZ Sign Company
Ed Larsen, City of Flagstaff
Chuck Ley, City of Flagstaff
Greg Brooks, City of Flagstaff
Hillarie Nickerson, Citizen
Phil Scandura, Citizen
Crystal Bowen, Citizen
Steve Nelson, Citizen
Gerry Craig, Citizen

2. Recap Focus Group purpose

Phil opened the meeting with handing out the resolved issues and emphasizing that the group had three items left (new technology, sign illumination/dark skies and design enhancements). He also wanted the group to try and complete these last three items if possible.

3. Discussion regarding signage and related issues associated with the rewrite of the Land Development Code

5. New technology

- Need to establish clear definitions and regulations for the use of vinyl covers and perforated signs otherwise they will be difficult to enforce.
- Moving signs or flashing signs used by ADOT or road crews are supposed to attract the driver's attention and pass on critical information. They are temporary in nature and shouldn't be part of the sign code.
- LED signs:
 - Full animation is available on LED and newer technology signs. Current code doesn't allow animation and the group agreed that it should remain as not allowed.

- The LED technology (as an example) opens up the issue of full coverage of the sign surface and should there be a color spectrum limitation for these sorts of signs
- Changeable type or face of an LED type sign currently has some accepted exceptions that are not written into the sign code. E.g. gas stations are allowed to change their prices once a day.
- Time and temperature signs on banks are allowed under the current code; this was OK by the group and should remain.
- Discussion on the use of LED signs as a monument sign for multi-tenant developments to allow each of the smaller tenants to have an opportunity for highway signage. The discussion on frequency of text changes were resolved to be no more than once per hour.
- There was a lot of discussion on whether the entire face of the sign could change or just 20% of the sign. Examples included monument signs for small shopping centers that would allow the "non-anchor" store names to be sequenced through every hour. Then the discussion was what if the entire cabinet was an LED and the sign included a LOGO, hours of operation, etc., and the entire LED cabinet changed....was that then an issue of changeable copy or did it need a separate permit for each sign that was rotated through. Many ideas – no resolution.
- No resolution on whether the changeable copy LED sign would apply to a single use development, e.g. Walgreens.
- The group also wanted the consultant to address how other city's viewed the percentage of the sign face that was changeable. Is the 20% too little? What would be the right number?
- The sign code should be written to include new technologies (even those that are currently not available; such as three dimensional hallo-graphic projections, or something not yet known)
- The consultant needs to add some definitions; one would be animation. The thought here was that when the text changes, if it is allowed to diffuse from one image to another, which would be animation. It should happen instantly.
- If certain exceptions are going to be allowed, they must be clearly spelled out.
- Window signs need to be permitted so as not to become a billboard type sign. This goes to issue #12.
- Resolved.

7. Sign illumination – dark skies

- The issue here was discussion in conjunction with LEDs that are adjustable. They are brighter during the daytime and can either be

manually or automatically dimmed at night. If they are not dimmed at night, the graphics will wash out and the sign is not readable.

- Phil brought up the fact that most LEDs are louvered signs and that this is done for sun-shading of the sign face. Without it, some signs may be unreadable. LEDs provide a very "straight" or narrow beam of light (similar to laser lights) and therefore shading is important. This issue also has some bleed over into the Outdoor Lighting Focus Group and dark sky issues.
- Currently signs are regulated by color, not brightness. Lighted letters can be no more than 50% of the sign cabinet. An issue here that was discussed was the palette of color that can be used for the back-ground of the letters. Consensus that the background should be controlled by light output rather than color.
- Background colors need to be better defined with specific names or light spectrum frequency; i.e. "yellow" instead of "tangerine" or "mandarin"? Needs to be coordinated with the Outdoor Lighting Focus Group as well.
- It was discussed that the sign lighting or brightness is currently not figured in with the lumen count for the property. Agreement that it should be. Concern for the time and complexity issue on this topic.
- Support for the notion that the signage focus group should come out in favor of neon lights, especially in specific corridors (Route 66 district or Down Town district). Could even be used as an architectural feature.

8. Design Enhancements/Incentives

- Current design enhancements offer very little for the cost involved. The expense of natural materials is often prohibitive to a new shop owner.
- Wood is a difficult item because of weatherization issues and construction issues with electrical items.
- Consultant should suggest more practical percentages for the design enhancements.
- A brief discussion included allowing flexibility where an applicant could combine the window/wall and monument sign to get larger and/or taller signs. It was also thought that the 12' with enhancements was OK, but in any case, they didn't want it to grow beyond the Coconino County's 15' limit.
- The height of the sign as a percentage of the building appears to be a little confusing and maybe should be better defined.
- A question was brought up about if the Downtown group allows more mixed use and increases the height of structures to 6-8 stories; what then should be the effect on signage. (i.e., if you have commercial on the ground floor and two stories of offices above that and then residential at the upper stories, at what height above street level do you restrict the signs? Can a sign for an office be placed on the third floor (potentially 30 feet in the air?) The group felt that T-6 needed a separate code that would specifically address this issue.
- Resolved.

Other:

- Group wanted the issue under item 12, window signs; to include some definition of how the percentage of the sign for the new perforated signs would be counted (inside or outside) on the 25% rule.

4. **Next meeting:**

The group was informed of the next step actions (since it was felt that they could conclude all of the key issues as resolved. It was mentioned that Roger Eastman would be compiling three reports of the results from the eleven focus groups. This information would be either forwarded to the consultant, to the Regional Land Use and Transportation plan group and/or to other Staff agencies that the decisions may impact. The information concerning the established dates of the Charrette (5-9 October 2009) was mentioned as well as that the reports would be published on the City web site for review and comment.

5. **Future meetings:**

None. Mission accomplished. Thanks all!

6. **Adjournment** at 10:10 am.